**Follow up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament – annual report 2020**

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**2. Reference number:** 2021/2039 (INI) / A9-0021/2022 / P9\_TA PROV(2022)0072

**3. Date of adoption of the resolution:** 10 March 2022

**4. Competent Parliamentary Committee:** Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM)

**5. Brief analysis/assessment of the resolution and requests made in it:**

In its resolution, the European Parliament reaffirms its strong commitment to gender equality and endorses gender mainstreaming as one of its official policy approaches to ensure it. It reiterates its call for an audit to be carried out to map the current situation in terms of gender equality and gender mainstreaming and make recommendations for both the political and administrative sides of Parliament’s activities and structures. The resolution suggests that this audit should cover all the areas and indicators developed in the ‘Gender-sensitive parliaments’ toolkit[[1]](#footnote-1) of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) aiming at updating Parliament’s gender action plan and roadmap.

Under the section ‘Delivering legislation with a gender perspective’, the European Parliament calls on the Commission to strengthen its institutional framework for supporting gender mainstreaming, i.e. through an implementation plan for gender mainstreaming in each policy area. In addition, the resolution highlights the need for the Commission to develop a training strategy on gender mainstreaming, which should be made available to all its staff and make full use of the EIGE’s tools and expertise in this field. It also calls on the Commission to consider carrying out and publishing a gender impact assessment for each legislative proposal and include explicitly gender-related objectives and performance indicators in its proposals.

The resolution also includes calls on the Commission to improve accountability and budgetary transparency, apply the new expenditure tracking methodology to all EU funding programmes and implement gender budgeting in the midterm review of the current Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 (MFF), according to the recommendations of the European Court of Auditors. It also calls on the Commission to closely monitor the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), in particular as regards the existing provisions linked to gender equality, and to include relevant indicators in the recovery and resilience scoreboard to monitor the impact of national plans on gender equality. The European Parliament regrets that several EU funding programmes such as the European structural and investment funds, the Common Agricultural Policy and Erasmus+ did not take gender equality effectively into account. It also stressed the need to mainstream gender equality into the architecture of the EU’s economic governance and the European Semester.

The resolution furthermore calls on the Commission to include in upcoming legislative proposals the requirement to systematically collect gender-disaggregated data and relevant gender equality indicators for all programmes and to include gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation requirements. Finally, the resolution calls on Member States to fully transpose and implement the Work-Life Balance Directive and on the Commission to effectively monitor this process.

**6. Response to requests and overview of action taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission:**

**Paragraph 38**

The Commission underlines that, in line with the Interinstitutional Agreement of 16 December 2020 on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, as well as on new own resources, the 2021 revised Better Regulation guidelines and toolbox provide a strengthened framework to the Commission services to identify, assess and report gender impacts, in evaluations and impact assessments. The better regulation framework puts emphasis on proportionality with respect to the scope and depth of the analysis in impact assessments. This means that only the most relevant and significant impacts are analysed. The principle of proportionality in an integrated and balanced analysis is fully in line with the Interinstitutional Agreement for Better Law-Making of 13 April 2016. Under the better regulation framework, the Commission highlights that impact assessment is an integrated exercise, which analyses significant environmental, social and economic impacts of policy options analysed. Impact assessments need to cover all significant impacts in relation to a proposal under preparation, including gender impacts.

As far as the inclusion of gender-related objectives and indicators in the Commission’s proposals is concerned and as underlined in its dedicated June 2021 Communication, the Commission attached the highest importance to maximizing effectiveness of EU spending and is committed to continue to improve its performance framework for the EU budget. Many advances have been made in this respect already with the 2021-2027 MFF (e.g., streamlining of performance indicators, with their inclusion in legal bases, enhanced availability of performance information, including through dedicated performance websites, etc.). In this context, the indicators included in the Commission’s proposals for the 2021-2027 MFF were selected based on their relevance to the core aspects of a given programme, their reliability, availability of underlying data and cost-efficiency. For the next programming period, the Commission will assess the appropriateness including objectives and related indicators, when preparing proposals for future EU funding programmes, in the context of evaluations and impact assessment or other relevant preparatory steps. Performance indicators will then be selected based on the aforementioned criteria (relevance to a given objective, availability and quality of data, as well as cost-efficiency). Finally, the Commission reiterates that it counts on the cooperation of all relevant stakeholders, and in particular of the co-legislators, in this area of shared responsibilities.

**Paragraph 40**

In line with the interinstitutional agreement (IIA) accompanying the MFF 2021-2027, the Commission has been working hard to develop a methodology to track gender related expenditure in the EU funding programmes under the MFF 2021-2027.

In particular, point 16 (f) of the IIA between the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament stipulates that a gender equality tracking methodology for certain direct management programmes at programme level shall be implemented no later than 1 January 2023, to test the feasibility of the methodology. At mid-term, it will be explored whether the methodology can be extended to other programmes for the remainder of the MFF. However, the Commission, drawing from its long-standing and deep commitment to the promotion of equality, including gender equality, has spared no efforts to advance both time‑wise and scope-wise faster than envisaged by the IIA. As a result, the Commission has developed the pilot methodology and will test it in pilot phase already in the context of Draft Budget 2023 on all EU funding programmes under the MFF 2021-2027.

Concerning the recommendations of the European Court of Auditors in this regard, the Commission has accepted and already acts on recommendations 5a) and 5c); however, with regard to recommendation 5b) and as explained in the dedicated Commission’s reply to the Court’s Special Report, the Commission will report, in line with the Interinstitutional Agreement accompanying the 2021-2027 MFF. Given that the methodology will only be phased in over the duration of the 2021-2027 MFF, reporting will be limited to the available data at any given moment in time.

**Paragraph 42**

The Commission is bound by the legal framework governing the Recovery and Resilience Facility. In particular, the Regulation governing the Recovery and Resilience Facility requires that Member States’ Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRPs) include measures to contribute to gender equality and equal opportunities for all and that mainstream these objectives. Therefore, under the RRF Regulation, it is for the Member States to ensure that their plans contribute to gender equality and explain how. The Commission will assess the explanations provided by the Member States in their plan. The implementation of the national plans is the responsibility of the Member States. Based on the recovery and resilience plans and the implementation data reported by the Member States, the Commission will report on how the recovery and resilience plans tackle inequalities between women and men.

Furthermore, in order to track the RRF contribution to gender equality, the Commission, in consultation with the Member States, assigns a flag to measures with a focus on gender equality, in line with the Delegated Act on social expenditure reporting (Delegated Regulation 2021/2105).

The European Semester provides a well-established framework for coordinating the economic and employment policies of the Member States. The Autumn Package which launched the 2022 Semester cycle reaffirmed that policy priorities will be structured around the four dimensions of competitive sustainability and in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. The Annual Sustainable Growth Survey (ASGS) highlighted that fairness, as one of these four key dimensions, needs to be at the heart of the recovery, recognising that women and men have been differently impacted by the pandemic. The ASGS also stressed that implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights is crucial to achieving upward social and economic convergence. Accordingly, the proposal for the 2022 Joint Employment Report, as part of this Autumn Package, had a reinforced focus on the Pillar’s principles and integrated the 2030 EU headline targets and the headline indicators of the revised Social Scoreboard in its analysis. The European Semester Spring Package will also integrate the European Pillar of Social Rights and Social Scoreboard into its analysis including the gender employment gap. The Spring Package will also integrate an assessment of progress towards the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals including specifically Goal 5 on gender equality.

**Paragraph 43**

The Commission has taken further steps to enhance the gender dimension in its funding programmes under the current MFF 2021-2027.

In particular, it strengthened the gender equality requirements in the Cohesion policy funding programmes, such as the European Regional Development Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+). The legislative frameworkincludes a requirement for Member States to organise a partnership with competent national and regional authorities, including relevant civil society organisations and bodies such as those responsible for promoting fundamental rights and gender equality. Gender equality is also a crosscutting principle, meaning that gender equality and a gender perspective must be factored in and promoted throughout all stages of the process to prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes. In addition, when drafting the criteria for the selection of operations, the Managing Authorities must make sure that the criteria ensure gender equality.

There are also stronger enabling conditions for funding to ensure there is a supportive environment for cohesion policy investments to be effective and efficient. Member States must have effective mechanisms in place to ensure the compliance of the programmes with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Member States that want to invest in enhancing the effectiveness and inclusiveness of labour markets and access to quality employment through developing social infrastructure and promoting social economy under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and in promoting a gender-balanced labour market participation, equal working conditions, and a better work/life balance including through access to affordable childcare, and care for dependent persons under ESF+ must also present a national strategic framework for gender equality.

Beyond the mainstreaming obligation, Member States also have the obligation to support targeted actions for gender equality under the ESF+. Furthermore, the ESF+ is available to support vulnerable groups and together with the other funds (for example Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund) it contributes to labour market integration and social inclusion of migrant women.

A new requirement to track the funding for gender equality has been introduced for the cohesion policy funds, allowing for better monitoring of the gender targeted and mainstreaming investments.

In addition, the Commission, while negotiating the new partnership agreements and programmes, will monitor the Member States commitment to the horizontal principles and specific targeted actions as well as the new tracking mechanism for gender related expenditure introduced by the Common Provisions Regulation.

The gender dimension has also been successfully integrated into the new Common Agricultural Policy 2023-2027 (CAP), which the Commission adopted in December 2021. Under the new policy, as of 2023, Member States will be required to assess the situation of women in farming and in rural areas and address related challenges in their strategic plans. Member States will need to involve the bodies responsible for gender equality in the process of preparing their CAP strategic plans. They will also be required to strengthen their capacity in gender mainstreaming and in the collection of sex-disaggregated data. On data collection, Member States will have to report the number of beneficiaries as well as the number of new farmers by gender. To guide Commission staff in their assessment of the national strategic plans under the CAP, the Commission has developed a toolkit on how to implement this specific objective. In addition, The Long Term Vision for EU Rural Areas adopted in 2021 includes a flagship initiative ‘Social resilience and Women in rural areas’ that will contribute to fighting gender inequalities.

The 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme observes the principles recognised by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. In particular, it seeks to ensure full respect for the right to equality between women and men and the right to non-discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, and to promote the application of Articles 21 and 23 of the Charter.

Faithful to these principles, Erasmus+ aims at promoting equity and inclusion by facilitating the access to participants with fewer opportunities whenever their participation is limited or prevented by social obstacles caused by gender discrimination.

In line with the principles of the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, Erasmus+ contributes to fostering equality, including gender equality, in all the sectors it addresses, thereby empowering people of all backgrounds with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need for employment, social integration and active citizenship. In particular, the programme aims to overcome gender stereotypes in education and educational careers and to strengthen the promotion of participation of women in area of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) education, especially in engineering, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and advanced digital skills. This is done through support for guidance or the development of new and forward-looking higher education curricula for engineering and ICT based on the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics) approach[[2]](#footnote-2).

The participation in the programme however reflects to a large extent the interacting effects of the proportion of certain fields of study and gender participation in those fields. In particular, within the Erasmus+ Higher Education learning mobility, males predominate in fields such as "Engineering, manufacturing and construction" and "Information and communication technologies". Nevertheless, these subject fields are outweighed in size by female dominated fields such as "Arts and humanities" and "Social sciences, journalism, and information".

The framework adopted on 22 October 2021 for inclusion measures under the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes reinforces the Commission’s action to support, monitor and report on the implementation of inclusion measures. This framework includes opportunities for specific financial support for people in need of additional support, personalised accompanying measures, more flexible formats, etc. The programmes also include mechanisms to prioritise quality projects involving participants with fewer opportunities and addressing the themes of inclusion and diversity.

The Commission will closely monitor the implementation of these inclusion measures at national level through the Erasmus + National Agencies. It also continues monitoring that the participation in the programme is well-balanced through a set of core indicators disaggregated, where appropriate, according to country, gender and type of action and activity.

**Paragraphs 45 and 46**

The Gender Equality Strategy emphasises gender mainstreaming as a central horizontal tool for the Commission’s gender equality work. Within the Commission, the dedicated Task Force on Equality, composed of an Equality Coordinator in each Directorate-General of the Commission and in the European External Action Service and of a Task Force secretariat, supports the Commission’s work in equality mainstreaming, including gender mainstreaming. This includes providing strategic guidance, and raising awareness and promoting skills development through newsletters and equality (including gender) mainstreaming trainings.

The Commission provides training workshops on quality mainstreaming, including specific ones on gender mainstreaming, to Equality Coordinators and to all Commission staff. In particular, the Directorate-General for Budget has organised, in cooperation with the European Institute for Gender Equality, specialised trainings to strengthen Commission staff’s ability to assess whether given expenditure contributes towards gender equality. More generally, the Secretariat of the Task Force on Equality implements a learning and development strategy on equality mainstreaming. This includes training courses as well as a dedicated catalogue of relevant resources on equality mainstreaming.

As the Task Force works to mainstream all equality strands of Article 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), it also facilitates an intersectional perspective in gender mainstreaming. Equality coordinators cooperate closely and exchange good practices on gender mainstreaming also in the context of coordination structures such as the inter-service group on equality between women and men.

What is more, with a view to further promoting the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming, the Commission organised in 2021 specialised trainings on the inclusion of gender equality in the EU budget and is currently in the process of introducing a recurrent specialised training on this topic. The training targets all relevant Commission staff across all Commission services.

**Paragraph 47**

The Commission takes full note of the European Parliament request to systematically disaggregate data by gender. All its Eurostat statistics are already broken down by sex where relevant, in particular in the social statistics field. Moreover, the variable sex has been included as one of the core variables in the Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 October 2019 establishing a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households, based on data at individual level collected from samples and in the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2181 of 16 December 2019 specifying technical characteristics as regards items common to several datasets pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2019/1700.

**Paragraph 49**

The Commission has been supporting the correct transposition of the Work-Life Balance Directive[[3]](#footnote-3). In 2021, the Commission organised an informal implementation workshop and is in continuous bilateral exchanges with Member States to support and ensure a timely and comprehensive transposition of the Directive. Member States are furthermore encouraged to go beyond these minimum standards when reviewing their family leave policies to enable men and women to equally thrive both personally and professionally.

The Commission acknowledges that the transposition of this directive by August 2022 will bring an important incentive and greater possibility to share parental responsibilities within couples where both partners work. It is also expected to help counter gender stereotypes and bias related to taking parental leave and, in the longer term, lead to more men being engaged in unpaid work.

1. The toolkit focuses on five key areas to be addressed: equal opportunities to enter the parliament, equal opportunities to influence the parliament’s working procedures, adequate space on the parliamentary agenda for women’s interests and concerns, the production of gender-sensitive legislation and compliance with the symbolic function of the parliament; regrets the fragmented implementation of gender mainstreaming across policy areas and institutions at the EU level. See at [https://eige.europa.eu/gender- mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-sensitive-parliaments](https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-sensitive-parliaments) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The use of multidisciplinary pedagogies (teaching of science in political, environmental, socio-economic, and cultural contexts) is a powerful vehicle for making STEM subjects and careers more attractive. This is also known as the STEAM approach to science education and embraces the creative potential of connecting STEM education with the arts, the humanities, and the social sciences [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52017PC0253> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)